

Public participation in the Kura

IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum

Developed by the International Association for Public Participation

INCREASING LEVEL OF PUBLIC IMPACT				
INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:	Public Participation Goal:
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:	Promise to the Public:
We will keep You informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.
Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:	Example Tools:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fact sheets ● Web Sites ● Open houses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public comment ● Focus groups ● Surveys ● Public meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshops ● Deliberate polling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizen Advisory Committees ● Consensus-building ● Participatory decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizen juries ● Ballots ● Delegated decisions

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The following major steps should be stressed when discussing PP:

- Step 1: **Inform:** Draw people's attention to the existing problems.
- Step 2: **Consult:** Launch open public dialog and build confidence to create understanding of the situation, the causes and consequences. Provide feed-back on how public input influence the decisions;
- Step 3: **Involve:** Engage people and encourage active public participation in activities taking place in the field. Motivate people to do and/or contribute something in the process;
- Step 4: **Collaborate:** Build public willingness to collaborate actively through public input (suggestions, proposals, comments, etc.) that will be later adequately reflected in the relevant decisions. Motivate people to continue and improve;
- Step 5: **Empower:** Involve public actively on decision-making on the local level and empower (e.g. through citizen's advisory committees).

1. **Legislation base for the public participation in the countries**

Legislative acts containing provisions on the public participation in the field of environment:

- Constitution of Georgia (Article 37)
- Law and code on Water (Article 13)
- Law on Protection of Environment (Chapter II - Rights and Duties of Citizens in the Sphere of Environment Protection, Article 6 - Rights of Citizens in the Sphere of Environmental Protection)
- Law on Environmental Permits (Articles 15-16)
- Decree of the President of Georgia ? 389 issued on June 25, 1999 on Submitting of National Environmental Report
- General Administrative Code
- Aarhus Convention (no specific legal acts) (Az – Law, 1999)
- Other sector related laws
- Environment and Water related conventions
- Framework conventions (Teheran)
- Bilateral agreements

2. **Institutional arrangements for the public participation**

Ministry of Environmental and Natural Resources Protection

- Principle of Public Participation in Decision Making Process – ensuring public participation in making important decisions concerned with implementation of the activities;
- Principle of Access to the Information – information on condition of the environment is open and accessible for the society.

Water Resources Management Agency (AM)

Water State Committee (AM)

Environmental Committee of the National Assembly (AM)

NGOs:

- **CENN – Caucasus Environmental NGO Network** – Ensures access to environmental information, facilitates communication between the public, private and governmental agencies, increases capacity of civil society organizations and stimulates public participation process in environmental decision-making.
- **Kura-Araks Coalition** – public involvement into decision-making process
- **EIA Library (CENN)**

Joint initiative:

- **Aarhus Center** – ensuring public access to the information and public participation
- **REC—Regional Environmental Center of Caucasus**
- **Public Environmental Information Centres (CENN, ESU, AALL)**
- **River Basin Councils**
- **Water Users Associations**

3. **Level of public involvement into transboundary water management in the Caucasus region**

The level of public involvement into transboundary water management is rather low and ineffective.

- low level of civic education and environmental awareness at both governmental and public levels
- no recognition of importance of environmental issues at all levels
- no trust in the public participation process.
- transboundary cooperation for management of joint nature resources is rather weak and needs adequate attention.

NON-EFFICIENT IN AZ

4. PP tools and mechanisms used/or developing in the countries

Tools/mechanisms	Already used	Developing	Not applicable
Policy tools	X		
Fact sheets, registers			X
Open public meetings, discussion and hearings regarding the problems and reforms	X		
Information available – no access			X
Special internet sites			X
Roundtables / stakeholders meetings	X		
Public-education program - Press releases and public service announcements (various media) - Brochures and handouts - Slogans / billboards - Information centers - Speakers office, films, and slide shows for community organizations - Coordination with civic and professional organization resources - Libraries and town halls	X In the framework of projects		
Media campaign and social marketing - Announcements - Advertising / PSAs - Newspaper articles, water newspaper - Press-conferences - TV and Radio programs	X	X In the framework of projects	
Campaigns, public actions	X		
Demonstrative projects, Advertising of success stories in the field (local, international)		X	
Specific training and workshops	X		
Advocacy teaching	X		
Networking	X		
Hot line and communication mechanisms	X		
Organizing watchdog groups – regional citizens advisory committees (RCAC)		X	
Regional River basin councils		X	
Participation in governmental/parliamentary committees	X		
Participation in legislation drafting		X	

Mailing lists and electronic networking	X		

Mainly PP tools are directed towards information provision and increase of environmental awareness; however, these actions are not followed by public participation in concrete actions and development of relevant mechanisms and skills to allow the citizens to be part of the decision-making process.

5. Challenges facing the process of public involvement into transboundary water management in the Caucasus region

#	Challenge	Comment
1.	Little or no political will to create space for constrictive public participation in the countries as well as in the region	At the national level, it requires full democratic process that allows minority interest groups to have a say in policymaking and planning At the regional level, cooperation at the governmental level is rather tense
2.	Not affective implementation of the laws referring to public participation in the water management	Implementation mechanisms for the relevant laws must be elaborate and adopted AM –GOOD GEO – BAD AZ -
3.	Little or no trust in the public participation both at the central and grassroots levels	Public participation must be an integral part of the planning processes and not the parallel process
4.	Lack of knowledge and capacity of the State authorities regulating the water sector with regard to the need in PP	
5.	Low level of public environmental and civic awareness and lack of capacity of public associations	Environmental and civil awareness of the public groups must be raised to ensure informed public participation in the decision making process.
6.	No initiative on the ground	
7.	No consumers associations	AM – GOOD AZ - GOOD
8.	Top-down governance	
9.	No public accountability	
10.	No concrete indicators for implementation of Aarhus convention	
11.	Not enough information in libraries about transboundary water monitoring and data	
12.		

6. Recommendations

Recommendations	Short-term	long-term	Additional funding needed	Additional funding NOT needed	Basin-wide	Bilateral mechanisms	Need for legal, institutional and management changes	Application of different information tools and PP methods and instruments.
Legal framework: PP should become formal part of environmental decision-making. Introduction of clear obligation for the State authorities to be open for PP in the field of water management. This provision can be included in the Law, where competences of central and local authorities are listed, or elsewhere in the law.	X							
Elaboration of National water policy and strategy with clear mechanisms of PP	X							
Education and capacity building of State authorities regulating the water sector with regard to need in PP	X	X						
Implementation of civic educational, public awareness and participation campaigns to raise consumers' awareness regarding environmental, economical and social values of water resources and civic rights and responsibilities	X	X						
Implementation of community mobilization, capacity building and educational work at the local level to raise initiative on the grassroots level	X							
Information and education of consumers in benefits of association in consumers groups or water users associations, and training in consumers advocacy	X	X						
Pilot projects to demonstrate success of PP in water management Use of best examples of other river basins								
Role and status of river basin councils must be clearly defined	X							
Development of electronic communication								
Unification of reporting schemes and tools of PP	X							

Increase of role of regional organizations and projects working on increase of PP in environmental decision making								
Harmonization of legislation of SCC to the EU legislation								